

On-Site Assessment Committee Teleconference May 27, 1997

The On-Site Assessment Committee of the National Environmental Laboratory Accreditation Conference (NELAC) met by teleconference on Tuesday, May 27, 1997. Mr. Gary Bennett, Chair of the Committee, led the meeting. A list of action items is shown as Attachment A. A list of participants is shown as Attachment B.

Mr. Wayne Davis reported that Ms. Jeanne Mourrain had given him an "unofficial" agenda for the upcoming national conference. It is:

- 1) Monday 7/28 - ELAB Meeting
- 2) Tuesday 7/29 - Standing Committee Meetings
- 3) Wednesday 7/30 - Standing Committee Meetings
- 4) Thursday 7/31 - NELAC Voting Session
- 5) Friday 8/1 - EPA ODW - Method Streamlining

It was the consensus of the committee that the On-Site Assessment Standing Committee would only need one full day at the conference to prepare for the Thursday voting session.

Mr. Gary Bennett reported that he had mailed each committee member a package dated May 22, 1997 that contained the mark-ups of Chapters 1, 2, and 3 of the Assessor Training Manual and the revised edition of Chapter 3 - On-Site Assessment (April 21, 1997). Only a few members had received the information as of the time of the conference call. Messrs. Steven Baker and Roy Covert reported that they had compiled their review of Chapter 4 and that they were considering several options up to and including a total re-write. They stated that their comments would be sent to Mr. Bennett within a few days.

Mr. Roy Covert reiterated that the format of the entire Assessor Training Manual needs to be revamped to facilitate referencing of the information contained in the document. No consensus was reached at this time although general agreement was voiced. (See example - Appendix I)

The remainder of the call was focused on Chapters 1 and 2 of the Assessor Training Manual as reviewed by Rosanna Buhl and Wayne Davis. The page-by-page deliberations were led by Rosanna Buhl. The committee was able to finish discussions on all sections except section 2.5 and agreed to table only two issues which were:

- 1) Section 2.2 - Debate centered around Bullet 2 which states that the assessment staff should be adequately supervised. Problem of interpretation: a) global interpretation - assessors are accountable to the accrediting authority; b) literal interpretation - could refer to the direct supervision of the assessment team while on-site.

- 2) Section 2.3.2 - Debate centered around whether or not an assessor should/could ensure privacy and confidentiality.

NOTE: The text of the recorded comments represent the cumulative discussions of the committee. Most, but not all, of the recorded comments resulted from the review performed by Ms. Buhl and Mr. Davis.

Chapter One

General		Global search replaced "inspector" with "assessor" and "inspection" with "assessment".
Section 1.0	a)	Modified last sentence of Paragraph 1 to reflect what the NELAP recognizes (assessment personnel).
	b)	Minor wordsmithing for each of the four bullets. Move Bullet 1 to the last and reword for clarification.
Section 1.1	a)	Second Paragraph - Proper references to NELAC standards included.
	b)	Sixth Paragraph - Footnote 1 established in Sentence Two - This footnote was established later in the chapter, but needs to be posted here.
	c)	Paragraphs 7, 8, & 9 - Minor wordsmithing.
Section 1.3		Third Paragraph - Restructured and established bullets to enhance clarification.
Section 1.4	a)	Corrected title in Bullet 1 to read, "Chapter 2, Assessment Principles and Practices".
	b)	Removed "handling of confidential information" from Bullet 2. Tabled discussion on removing "and timeliness and integrity in record keeping and reporting." from Bullet 2.
	c)	Restructured last sentence of Bullet 3 for clarification.
	d)	Deleted reference to Chapter 6 (Bullet 5).

Chapter 2

Preamble	Correction of typo in sentence 3. "Design" was misspelled.
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- Section 2
 - a) This section resulted from a reorganization of the original material from Section 2.0 and 2.1 (Jablonski).
 - b) ASQC definition for "objective evidence" to be cited as Footnote 1, Paragraph 1 and removed from Section 2.3.3.
 - c) Bullets 1 & 2 - Minor revisions in sentence structure.
 - d) Bullet 4 - Adds "to investigate a complaint" as a reason for an unannounced assessment.
 - e) Replaces "are suspected" with "may exist" in Bullet 4.
- Section 2.2
 - a) Minor clarification of Sentence 2 - Paragraph 1.
 - b) Reordered bullets and added a bullet reflecting conflict-of-interest considerations.
 - c) Tabled discussion of Bullet 2 (see Minutes #5) until next conference call.
- Section 2.3.1
 - a) Changed title from "Inspection and Observation" to "Assessment and Observation".
 - b) Deleted Sentence 6 of Paragraph 1. Consensus was that it added little and could be interpreted as inflammatory.
- Section 2.3.2
 - a) Changed title from "Inquiries" to "Staff Interviews".
 - b) Bullet 2 under "Planning the Interview" generated much discussion over whether or not privacy and confidentiality are "ensurable" (see Minutes #5). This discussion was eventually tabled until a subsequent conference call.
 - c) Added another bullet under "Conducting the Interview" regarding the establishment of rapport before asking pertinent questions.
 - d) Under "Documenting the Interview", add to Bullet 2, "To avoid tension, read your notes as you write".
- Section 2.3.3
 - a) Remove "Ideally" from Sentence 3 of the first paragraph.
 - b) Paragraph 3 restructured for the sake of clarity.
 - c) "Apparent" used to replace "suspected" in Sentence 3.

- Section 2.3.4 a) Consensus among the committee established the evaluation report as legally binding and not the assessor's notes. Therefore, there is no need to require that assessors take notes in bound and numbered notebooks. Paragraph 1 reworded to reflect the committee's consensus. Steve Ankabrandt volunteered to research existing guidance regarding the preservation of on-site assessor's notes.
- b) Restructured Paragraph 2 and established bullets for emphasis.
- Section 2.4 a) In response to the consensus of the committee, the last part of Sentence 2 reading "not to judge the adequacy of the laboratory." was deleted. The committee clearly believes that this should be part of the responsibilities of an on-site assessor.
- b) The word "apparent" was substituted for "suspected" in the last sentence of Paragraph 1.
- Section 2.5 Added, but not discussed by the committee on this conference call. Will be Item 1 on the next call.

The next conference call is scheduled for Friday, June 13, 1997 from 12:30 to 2:30 p. m. EST.

Action Items
On-Site Assessment Teleconference
May 27, 1997

Item No.	Action	Date Completed
1.	Messrs. Steve Baker and Roy Covert will send their comments on Chapter 4 to Mr. Bennett.	

List of Participants
On-Site Assessment Committee Teleconference
May 27, 1997

Name	Affiliation	Telephone No.
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